

# Day Nursery Centre



# 100 YEARS

of Service to the Community

*...since 1909*

# In the Beginning

**T**his is a story about the tireless efforts of the pioneers of early childhood care and education who have helped to make Day Nursery Centre the success it is today. We dedicate this history to these many people.

We open the story at the turn of the century when Winnipeg was a happening place. City population swelled from 42,000 in 1901 to 150,000 by 1913. The upper class were located south of Portage Ave and later south of the Assiniboine River in Crescentwood and Fort Rouge. Eastern European immigrants tended to settle in the North End of Winnipeg. The North End became the working-man's area.

However, the North End initially had few services, like access to fresh water. Artesian wells and the rivers supplied water. In 1911, the North End population had twice the infant mortality rate of west and south Winnipeg. In 1913, City Council passed a by-law approving the construction of a 153-kl (94-mile) aqueduct from Shoal Lake to bring in fresh water.

The population explosion brought a surge in city developments and new buildings. Assiniboine Park was included in the Winnipeg city limits in 1905, and three years later the Redwood Bridge was built, reports the City of Winnipeg's Website.

Many of the now famous historic buildings were constructed from about 1907 to 1913, including the Law Courts, Bank of Montreal on the corner of Portage and Main, and CNR Union Station on Main Street.

Meanwhile, by 1914, Winnipeg had some 25,814 school-age children. This led to the construction of a host of new schools, including two new technical high schools. The Children's Hospital opened in 1912 and the YMCA opened its new building. Work on the new Legislative Building began in 1913, but stopped when war broke out. It would be completed along with the Shoal Lake Aqueduct in 1919.

Amid this immigration and rapid growth, a need arose to find employment for poor, working-class women and to care for their children. Many of the women lived in the North End. By 1911, there were nearly 12,000 working women in Winnipeg and double that number outside the city, according to the Manitoba Life and Times Website. The bulk of Winnipeg's working women were employed in workshops such as laundries and the garment district, stores, offices, and as housemaids. Many were making less than \$10 a week. This trend was occurring in many of Canada's cities and since many of the working women had children, it led to the formation of what became known as "day nurseries."

## Rise of Day Nurseries

Archival materials reveal that organized group child care in Canada dates back to the infant schools of the 1820s and were based on British models. These were

replaced with day nurseries. The first were patterned after a style of day nursery adopted in France about 1840, called a crèche. However, day nurseries in North America evolved quickly and formed their own unique style of child care.

All day nurseries in Canada began in the poorest districts. Most of the mothers using nurseries were widows, women who were deserted or had husbands who were unable to work. By 1912, six of the seven largest cities in Canada had at least one day nursery.

The early day nurseries had two objectives: to act as an employment agency—find work for the poor mothers—and to care for their children.

Day nurseries were one of the outcomes of a broad social reform movement at the time. This movement included various groups, but usually the Church and women's groups. They were interested in everything from women's right to vote (suffrage) and opposition to alcohol consumption (temperance), to safer factories, compulsory education and even a supply of clean water, among others, reports the Manitoba Life and Times Website.

## The Mother's Association

A group of upper class Winnipeg women, in tune with the various social issues, wanted to share their good fortune through performing community service work that served to combat the social ills.

This led them to form a club, which became known as the Mother's Association of Winnipeg. The first Annual General Meeting of the association was held in 1908. The Mother's Association of Winnipeg was incorporated in 1911 under *The Charitable Association Act* (the same year it came into effect). A program from an early meeting of the association identified "social science or community influence" as its objective.

A Manitoba Free Press article in March 1934, celebrating the association's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, records the evolution of the association:

"At a meeting with mothers of boys, called by Mr. H. Wilson, director of boys works at the YMCA, in 1908 it was moved by Mrs. John (Harriet) Dick and seconded by Mrs. Alexander Macdonald that an organization be formed to be known as the Mother's Association of Winnipeg."

The objects of the association, as embodied in the constitution, were, "The up-building of a more enlightened motherhood, to co-operate with all organizations that had for their object the welfare of the boys and girls of the community and opposing all influences that would endanger their lives and characters."

Mrs. Dick coordinated the club for the first two years. The club then found a need for a supervised playground, for which \$800 was raised, located in "the Central school grounds."

The Mother's Association pushed for wider use of

parks as recreation for both young and old. Eventually the parks were taken over by the Parks Board.

It was during this period that the Mother's Association became aware that many children were being neglected while their mothers had to work. They began to look for ways to improve the lives of children and their families. This led directly to the birth of Manitoba's first day nursery.



### Official Openings and Names

The official history of today's Day Nursery Centre began on March 12, 1909 when the Mother's Association of Winnipeg opened the first day nursery in the city at 303 Flora Avenue. The name most often used to refer to the nursery was the Mother's Association Day Nursery (although this was not the incorporated name until 1951). The association's 1911 Annual Report gave the name as "The Winnipeg Day Nursery," and the 1949 Annual Report as "The Mothers Association Day Nursery."

The 1909 opening was just a few months after the founding of a day nursery in Edmonton. This makes Winnipeg's Day Nursery Centre one of the first two nurseries to be established in Western Canada.

It's also worthy of note that the Jeanne D'Arc Day Nursery was the next day nursery to be established in Manitoba. Opened by the Franciscan Sisters, Jeanne D'Arc and the Mother's Association Day Nursery were the only two in the city until well into the 1930s.

In 1912, when larger quarters were necessary for the Mother's Association Day Nursery, it moved to Stella Avenue. The Manitoba Free Press (today's Winnipeg Free Press) records that in 1911 a deposit had been placed on a house at 378 Stella Avenue. A Board meeting of the Mother's Association was held in Eaton's French rooms where, "the ladies entertained a number of prominent businessmen." The meeting approved the purchase and appointed the men present to a campaign committee to raise funds to buy the house.

The men present included James Henry Ashdown, the "Merchant Prince of Winnipeg," owner of the Ashdown retail store and mayor of Winnipeg from 1907 to 1909; A. H. Pulford, an auctioneer, garage owner and city alderman; R. T. Riley, founder, Director and Vice President of Great West Life Assurance Company, an alderman, school trustee and President of the Winnipeg Board of Trade; and Alfred J. Andrews, a prominent Winnipeg lawyer involved in prosecuting the 1919 general strike leadership for seditious conspiracy.

With support and backing from these prominent men it's not surprising to learn that the new Mother's Association building was purchased with \$10,000 cash. The Stella Avenue Mother's Association of Winnipeg Day Nursery

### Few supervised play areas were available in Winnipeg for children in the early years circa 1912.

opened its doors in early 1912. Before it opened, the house was enlarged, a large "lavatory" added downstairs, and the place was painted and decorated, largely through volunteer help.

Another Manitoba Free Press article at the time recorded the opening of the nursery on Stella by the "Mother's club."

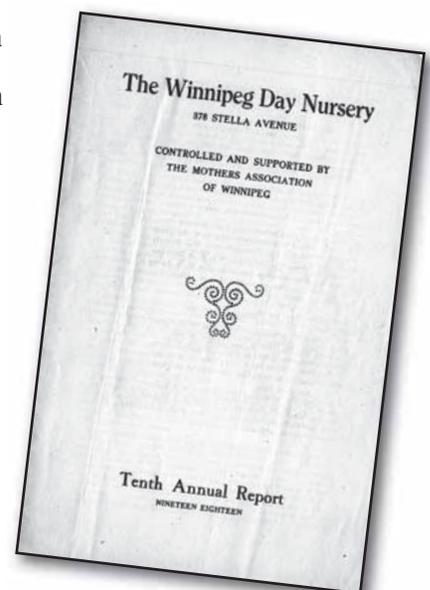
"Saturday was a red letter day in the history of the Mother's club for during that afternoon the new day nursery at 378 Stella Avenue was opened. Rev Dr. Gilbert Wilson gave the address and Mrs. R.D. Waugh declared the institution formally open." Wilson apparently was substituting for Mayor Waugh who had been called to the legislature.

"On the first floor were large kitchens, a dining room and a Board room." There was a recently added sun-porch that was heated where children played. The nursery was described as clean and well kept. It had high chairs, a long table with small chairs and a few toys, "Conspicuous amongst them a gray teddy bear... A baby carriage in one corner furnishes a haven of rest for a sleepy baby..." The article also notes that the

supply of high chairs was inadequate and so common chairs were used with the smaller children strapped in place at the eating table.

Typically, early nurseries in Canada were run by a matron who served as a cook, housekeeper and caregiver. For the nursery on Stella, the matron's and assistant matron's living quarters were upstairs.

Upstairs also housed many white cots and cradles for afternoon sleeps and upstairs was where the children were made presentable.





### **The Mother's Association Day Nursery, 378 Stella Avenue circa 1912.**

"There is a large bathroom upstairs where the little people are taken as soon as received and carefully gone over with soap and water." There was a well-stocked linen closet and a medical chest with a, "generous supply of household remedies."

Children spent a great deal of time cutting out pictures for scrapbooks and making paste and paper baskets, notes the Manitoba Free Press article.

Like many nurseries formed at this time, the Mother's Association Day Nursery was furnished mostly with cast-offs from wealthy families.

#### **Nursery Begins to Grow**

Funding of the Mother's Association Day Nursery was usually through fundraising activities such as social events patronized by the wealthy. These events included teas, dinners, parties and gala balls, but they also held more general public events, like rummage and carnation sales.

The 1918 annual report for the Mother's Association notes total receipts were about \$4,400 with expenses just under \$4,000. The sale of carnations brought a net return of \$700. There were also rummage sales, teas, interest on war bonds, a city grant of \$750, donations, and fees of \$410. The largest expense item was wages at just over \$851, followed by fuel at about \$453. Bread and milk cost about \$206; meat, eggs, bacon, butter and other food items added another \$230; ice (home refrigerators that ran on electricity were not yet in use) and water cost \$33; and light and telephone nearly \$90.

In addition, the statement records donations of flour, biscuits, rolled oats, apples, drugs and soap. There were no medical expenses listed because a Winnipeg doctor (Dr. Irvin) had volunteered his time to treat the children. The services of nurses at the Margaret Scott Mission were provided with a call from the nursery. Even the auditor donated his services. Some of the association's Board/Executive members also held a sewing meeting where they would make needed linens.

In the early years, the nursery had an entertainment committee. On March 10, 1913, the association planned a dance in the Coliseum with tickets selling for \$1 each. The dance grossed \$659.80. The Manitoba Free Press also records the committee organized a Cinderella dance at the Coliseum with proceeds going to nursery upkeep. And in March 1913, the association held a musical at the YWCA, "One of the most delightful musicals of the season..." reports the Manitoba Free Press.

A testament to the thriftiness of the nursery in the early years, the meager income was used to care for hundreds of children over a nine-month stretch in 1918 (three months were lost while the facility was taken over by various agencies due to the influenza epidemic). In addition, new work was found for 397 mothers, according to The Winnipeg Day Nursery Tenth Annual Report.

It's also interesting to note that a matron employed

### ***The Impact of the Flu Epidemic***

*Perhaps the greatest threat to children at the turn of the century was contagious disease, particularly for infants. Nurseries had to shut their doors when epidemics hit the city or were put under quarantine by health officials. The influenza pandemic of 1918-1919 killed up to 50 million people worldwide.*

*The disease also impacted the Mother's Association Day Nursery. From October 1918 to February 1919, the nursery was taken over by the Social Welfare Commission and Children's Aid Society to provide temporary shelter for children from those agencies. The agencies' facilities were used to house*

*very young children whose parents were too ill with influenza to care for them, according to the Mother's Association Day Nursery's 1918 Annual Report.*

*The disease threat also caused meetings and events planned by the nursery to be postponed or cancelled. There was a ban on public meetings, and many schools and businesses were ordered closed. It caused a burden on the working class and their labour unions rose up in protest arguing members were bearing the brunt of the economic burden brought by the epidemic. It created social divisions that set the stage for the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike.*

17—"Woman's Attitude to War"  
 MRS. NELLIE McCLUNG  
 Song—Mrs. R. Duncan  
 Piano Solo—Miss M. Panabaker

by the nursery visited almost all the homes of the children attending the facility and, "found conditions, as far as possible, favourable." She also reported that there was a committee from the Mother's Association who kept in touch with the families, securing aid if necessary.

The members of the Mother's Association often used the day nursery as a means to continue other community service endeavours. One of these was to hold social enlightenment meetings. A pamphlet distributed by the Mother's Association lists a series of meetings to be held in the YMCA Drawing Room. In October 1914, there was a Mother's Association sponsored talk by Nellie McClung on "Woman's Attitude to War."

McClung, a famous feminist and social activist, had captured the ears and minds of the socially active, upper class Winnipeg women who were part of the social reform movement. In 1916, largely through her efforts, Manitoba became the first province to give women the right to vote.

In 1919, the association had 153 women members with six serving on the executive and 21 on the Board. However, a report by the Secretary notes that the number of paid-up members was only 32.

The 1918 annual report also gives a hint of the atmosphere of the day with a note from the President that the, "great cloud of oppression which hung over us for so long has been lifted, by the sounding of victory and the successful ending of the great war."

She also made note of the influenza outbreak.

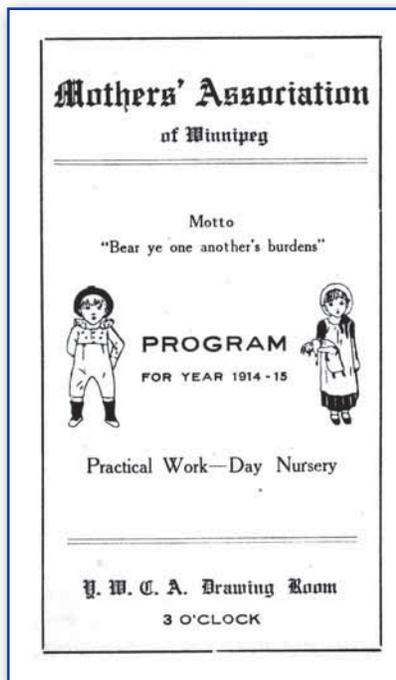
### How the Nursery Functioned

Like other day nurseries, the Mother's Association was first an employment agency for mothers of destitute or poor families. It would eventually reverse its priorities with care of children and education of the mothers or parents about child care as the main role. The employment service would disappear altogether and a greater emphasis would be placed on hiring trained staff.

During the early years of the nursery, there were no regulations governing the number of children that could be housed in a facility, staff-child ratios or the education of the caregivers. The nursery took in as many children as the staff and the building could handle. The number of children attending any one day tended to fluctuate widely with perhaps 100 one day and 20 on another.

The nursery initially provided care of infants a few weeks old, preschoolers and school-age children with about 10 years the most common upper age, although children up to age 12 or 14 were given care before and after school.

The hours of operation of the nursery coincided with the long working hours of the mothers—roughly 11 or 12 hours, from about 6:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday to Friday.



Dates of Meetings	
1914	
Oct. 17	"Woman's Attitude to War" MRS. NELLIE McCLUNG Song—Mrs. R. Duncan Piano Solo—Miss M. Panabaker
Nov. 6	"England in War Time" PROF. ALLISON Vocal Solo—Mrs. Pingle Piano Solo—Miss Ruth Allenberg
Dec. 4	"Ukrainian Poetry" MRS. LIVESAY Song—Miss Van Alstyne Song—Mr. Walter E. Nixon
1915	
Jan. 8	Reception to Members of the Association at the home of Mrs. T. R. Dear on 4 to 6 p.m.
Jan. 20	"Woman and Economics" MR. F. J. DIXON Song—Mrs. Walter Johnson Piano Solo—Miss Minnie Boyd
Feb. 19	"A Girl's Tribute to her Mother" MRS. F. W. HAMILTON Song—Miss Dorothy Nairn Piano Solo—Miss Doris Allen
March 12	Address DR. SALTON Music by Mr. Jordan and pupils
April 2	"Birds" MRS. C. P. ANDERSON Music to be arranged
April 23	Musical and Literary Program

Children were fed twice daily, a lunch and dinner. Typically, on arrival they were bathed and dressed in clean clothes or smocks. Then the children played or slept.

Bible readings to the children were common for many years. While corporal punishment of children was common in this era, nurseries tended to frown on such punishment. At the Mother's Association Day Nursery, children were, "instructed in the knowledge of Canadian customs, cleanliness and regularity," according to the association's February 19, 1913 Annual Report.

### Life and Times

The Walker Theatre opened in 1907 and hosted the big shows from Europe and the U.S. On December 16, 1912, the Coliseum opened its doors. It was Winnipeg's first hall exclusively designed for dancing. It was located on Fort Street. The Fort Garry Hotel opened in late 1913. The first big splash was the Victorian Order of Nurses Ball. During the heyday of vaudeville, on February 9, 1914, Winnipeg Pantages Theatre opened.

WWI began in 1914 and officially ended in 1919. The initial catalyst was in June 1914 with the assassination of Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo.

Following the war, many Winnipeg workers became frustrated by unemployment, inflation, poor working conditions and regional disparities. Combined with an influenza outbreak that closed many businesses, this led to a six-week general strike in the early summer of 1919, which crippled the city.

Some of the inventions of the decade include the zeppelin in 1900, the gas motored and manned airplane in 1903, Albert Einstein published the Theory of Relativity and made famous the equation  $E = MC^2$  in 1905, the Model T first sold in 1908, and Thomas Edison demonstrated the first talking motion picture in 1910.

## The 1920s: Child Care Beliefs Evolve

The 20s were a turbulent decade. They were a period of social, artistic and cultural upheaval. WWI was over and people wanted to return to normal life. Jazz music blossomed and the flapper redefined modern womanhood. While some Canadians lived the life of parties and conspicuous consumption, others lived in another world altogether. The factories that made war weaponry had shut down and few new establishments rose to take their place; unemployment climbed. From 1921 to 1923, Canada suffered a recession, causing bankruptcies and more unemployment.

Working class Canadians generally found themselves holding the short end of the economic stick. Historian Michiel Horn wrote that during the interwar period, "it

is likely that more than half of the Canadian people were never anything but poor." In 1929, the average annual wage was \$1,200 per year, which was over \$200 below what social workers estimated a family needed to live above the poverty level. So nothing really changed for working mothers of Winnipeg and day nursery was still an essential service for them.

By the early 1920s, many day nurseries had joined their local chapter of the Federation of Community Services, the precursor of the Community Chest and later the United Way. Community Chest became a funder of the

**Children at play (below and right) in the Mother's Association Day Nursery yard on Stella Avenue in 1920.**





Mother's Association Day Nursery in 1923. The organization canvassed the public for funds and gave a portion to the nursery.

A Manitoba Free Press article notes, "...the day nursery is an ideal place to leave children in good care, at a charge of 10 cents a day." The rate dropped to 15 cents a day for two children. Although the child care function of the nursery was basically a charity, parents were made to pay a little to give them the dignity that they were not receiving charity.

The matron of the nursery from 1925 to 1942 reported that children under her care were primarily of Eastern European origin or descent, and mostly from families that were financially destitute. The matron was likely similar to others that worked at day nurseries across the country during the first half of the twentieth century—an older woman, without any special training. She looked after the children who ranged in age from infancy to 10 or 12 years, supervised the nurse who cared for infants and the youngest children, and oversaw the nursery's domestic staff. She also managed the nursery's employment service.

Most of the nursery's staff consisted of housekeeping personnel such as maids, cooks and laundresses. Housekeeping staff was involved directly in child care. At times, schoolteachers provided lessons for children.

Prior to 1920, the nurseries provided a healthy environment for children, but primarily only focused on the physical environment. After about 1925, nurseries adopted care-giving practices where the primary concern of mothers was superseded by a concern for the social, emotional and "intellectual developmental supervision and management" of children. However, day nurser-

ies continued to act as employment agencies until after WWII. The war required more women to work to support their families while their husbands were off fighting. The role of nurseries changed from one focused on meeting women's needs to one dedicated to child needs. After the war, day nurseries stopped their employment services altogether and the charitable community service work by nursery staff was curtailed.

### Life and Times

In 1920, the Winnipeg Falcons hockey team won the world's first Olympic Gold medal in hockey, for Canada. That year, Harriet Dick (the organizer of the Mother's Association of Winnipeg) was the first woman candidate (as an Independent) to be listed on the ballot for provincial elections. Dick ran as the children's candidate, "... because the future depended upon children," reports the Manitoba Historical Society's Website.

Many of Winnipeg's first movie-only theatres opened in the 20s. A partial list includes: the Metropolitan, Lyceum, Colony (Gaiety/Eve), Garrick, Capital, Downtown (Rialto), The Osborne Theatre, College, Crescent, and Tivoli.

While the boom was on in the mid to late 20s, many of those enjoying their new-found income began speculating heavily in the stock market. They lost everything when Wall Street crashed in late 1929. The crash helped spawn "The Great Depression."

Some of the inventions of the decade include insulin in 1922, the first televised pictures of objects in 1924 and penicillin in 1928.

# The 1930s: The First Survey

Concurrently with the Wall Street crash was a severe drought that ravaged farmland in the U.S. and Canada. Consumers took an about face and they drastically cut spending. Prices in general began to decline followed by wages. The poor mothers were now earning even less if they still had work. Middle class families lost their homes and were forced to stand in the bread lines. Both spouses had to work and those with children now also had a desperate need for day nursery. The number of children who required the Mother's Association Day Nursery services skyrocketed.

However, while the nursery was in great demand and growing, funding was still its biggest issue. There were often more children than the staff could handle and with the many duties of the staff, the amount of time spent with each child was limited.

A Winnipeg Free Press story of October 14, 1939 "Day Nursery Children Need Your Help," reports that three women were looking after 25 babies under the age of four, "...a rather large handful to manage..."

The article described the organization and layout of the nursery with a back playroom, a glazed sun porch, and the playground with a teeter-totter, sandbox and tables.

The children were described as, "...ruddy, healthy looking boys and girls who play outside all summer long, and during the winter when the cold isn't too intense," the article notes.

The nursery was under care of a nurse, the matron and a kitchen assistant.

Children were well fed with, "...infants given heated milk in a bottle every three hours and a big dish of cream of wheat twice a day." The kitchen assistant made lunch usually consisting of soup, puddings, potatoes, vegetables and meat. "Then there was the afternoon treat of bread and butter and jam.

"At least five or six older brothers and sisters, graduates from the nursery, come in every day for lunch," says the article. So the nursery had a broader community reach.

Like today, the children had places for their clothes and to keep toys, cutout pictures and scrapbooks, and paste and paper baskets. The children put their, "equipment for daily fun in its special spot."

The Mother's Association Day Nursery was by now financed by the "Federated Budget" of the City of Winnipeg, through donations from Winnipeg citizens.

"All children come from poor but respectable parents. They work hard to keep themselves off city relief," says the Winnipeg Free press 1939 article.

In 1939, at the request of the Federated Budget Board, the first of several studies was conducted when an official committee, including the Director of the Family Bureau (now the Family Centre of Winnipeg) and a nursery school expert trained at the Institute of Child Studies in Toronto, examined the nursery with regard to premises, facilities, equipment, program and health provisions. Following this

**Matron Helen Thompson and children on the steps of 378 Stella Avenue in 1939.**



survey, recommendations were made for improving the nursery. It is interesting to note a few of the recommendations including hiring of a social worker to investigate all families applying, all families should be cleared through a confidential exchange, and that there should be closer cooperation with other social agencies.

## Life and Times

The "Dirty Thirties" got their name from the great clouds of black dust caused by soil being blown from farmers' fields. The prolonged drought of the 30s did not reach a climax until 1937, the year it didn't rain once in much of Canada's farming region. The dust was so thick at times that men doing fieldwork couldn't see their teams of horses. If this wasn't enough, clouds of grasshoppers swept over the prairies in search of the last blade of wheat or grass.

However, there were some bright spots. While wages were low, so were prices. You could see a movie or attend a play at the Walker, the Pantages or the Dominion for less than \$1. On ladies night at the movies, they often gave away free dishes. There was a streetcar that took riders out to Lockport and trains went several times a day in summer to Lake Winnipeg with a "Moonlight" train on Saturday nights to the great dance halls at Grand Beach and Winnipeg Beach, says Christopher Dafoe in his book, *Winnipeg: Heart of the Continent*.

In 1933, the Winnipeg and the St. John's football team merged to form the 'Pegs. The 'Pegs were later renamed the Winnipeg Blue Bombers and joined the newly created Western Interprovincial Football Union (one of the CFL's forerunners). And on Sunday afternoon December 7, 1935 Winnipeg won its very first Grey Cup, defeating Hamilton's Tigers (later called the Tiger Cats) 18 to 12.

The Red River College began life as the Industrial Vocational Education Centre in the mid-1930s. In 1948, the centre became the Manitoba Technical Institute (MTI) and by the 70s it was called, the Red River Community College. In recent years, the word "Community" was dropped from the name.

As the 30s drew to a close, and as the weight of the Depression was finally lifting, a new menace was looming—WWII.

Some of the inventions of the decade include stereo records in 1933, the tape recorder in 1934, the photocopier and jet engine in 1937, and the ballpoint pen in 1938.

# The 1940s: The Impact of the War Years

WWII spawned a massive jump in the number of working women, causing day nurseries across Canada to burst at the seams virtually overnight. Waiting lists appeared for the first time. It is then that the first calls came for government-supported child care programs. In 1943, the federal government initiated a child care scheme as an incentive and support for mothers of young children to work in war-related industries. Provinces were given responsibility for the establishment and operation of day cares. Funding was provided by the federal government but removed after the war.

The public health authorities across Canada had become very interested in the operation of day nurseries and felt a great deal had to be done to raise standards and relieve overcrowding. In 1947, a nursery school expert was brought in to study Manitoba nurseries and she submitted a report to the Welfare Council. She mentioned drawbacks in the physical facilities of day nurseries, and criticized programs. She placed the blame largely on the fact that there was insufficient staff and trained personnel working with the children. However, the government did nothing at this time to alleviate the situation.

The Mother's Association Day Nursery re-examined its administration and policies and once again it proposed that a social worker be employed, and an actual intake policy be followed. In 1949, with funding from Community Chest, a social worker and a helper were added part time.

There was marked improvement in subsequent years, particularly in the physical set-up of the nursery.

The growth of the nursery is evident from the Mother's Association Day Nursery's Annual Report of 1950. It records that during 1949, the nursery accommodated up to 55 children per day and the number was expected to increase as, "More mothers will be seeking factory work as a result of the step up in the production due to the war effort of the government."

It's noteworthy that the price for a full day's care of a child had risen to 40 cents a day by 1949. The price included meals. "From 35 to 63 babies and children up to school age get love and care from the matron... and her very capable staff."

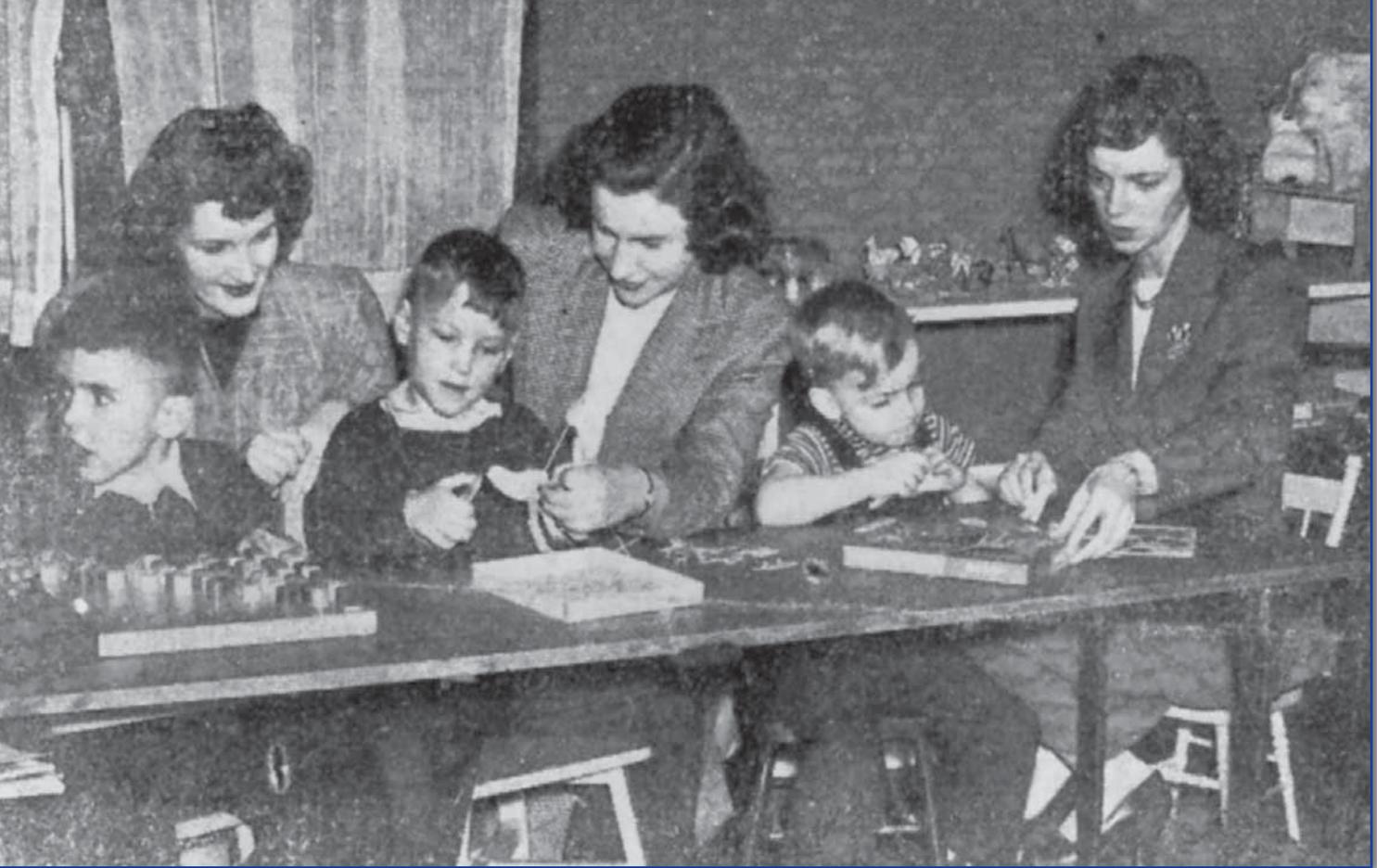
Many of the mother's were "D.P.s." (displaced persons), a term commonly used at this time to refer to new immigrants. Hours of operation were now 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., "but the staff usually work longer than the 10 hours... Many mothers have to bring their children earlier than 8:00 and return them later than 6:00 in order to make their streetcar and bus connections to and from work," notes the Annual Report.

Operation of the nursery appears to have been much the same at this point as when it first opened. The nursery

now had five staff. "The young babies are delivered to Miss Merryfield and her assistant Miss Marsh on the second floor of the nursery. Here they are undressed, put into cots or playpens and their day things. Diapers are changed and washed (no disposables yet), bottles and milk made ready, naps are taken, followed by play periods, etc. etc., until their mothers call for them.

"The older children are on the main floor of the nursery. Those who can't handle their own clothes, particularly in wintertime, are of course helped by Miss Learned and her assistant Miss Gatz. Here a Kindergarten procedure is followed. The children learn stories, sing songs, and busy themselves making all manner of things. At Easter, Christmas and Valentine's Day, etc. they make the decorations and cards to be used at the parties held on these days, and are also taught the significance of these days.





### **Three women from a local sorority work with the children on Stella Avenue.**

At 11:00 a.m. Kindergarten stops, and each child washes with his or her own towel and facecloth at a small basin built for children's height. They comb their hair, brush their clothes, and clean their fingernails. Then they all sit down at long tables to a delicious hot lunch with lots of fresh milk to drink. The lunch is prepared by Miss Russel who comes in to help from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. After lunch comes naptime. Each child takes his or her small mattress and Afghan and lies down until 3:00 p.m. During this period, Miss Learned does mending etc. and makes her reports, and Miss Russel makes up the sandwiches for teatime. At 3:00 p.m., the mattresses and Afghans are put away neatly in cupboards, and the children have their sandwiches and milk, and then play until they are called for by their parent. In the summer, they play outdoors on the shale backyard. In the winter, they play indoors with toys, jigsaw puzzles, or dress up in old clothes and play 'grown-up.' The laughter and high spirits that prevail during this play period makes one realize how happy the children are, completely unaware of racial background, religion or colour," notes the Annual Report

"The children are regularly examined by a visiting nurse. A doctor attends them when any serious illness or the common children's diseases develop."

At the various parties held throughout the year, "the goodies are supplied by the Board members and their friends, and it is a real treat to see the eyes sparkle when

the treats are set before the children. However, no one touches a thing until Grace has been said," notes the Annual Report.

During the Depression and through the war years, the nursery was, "taxed to the utmost for accommodation," adds the report. The nursery had a long waiting list and showed no sign of abating, "...so a social worker and helper... have been added to the staff on a part-time basis to investigate the applications in order to take care of the most needy cases. With the increase in divorces and the resultant broken homes, and mothers having to go out to work to add to the family income due to the high cost of living, it has been found that there are still numerous well-deserving cases that are unable to gain accommodation."

### **Life and Times**

WWII in Europe started on September 1, 1939 when Nazi Germany invaded Poland. The United Kingdom declared war on Germany on September 3, and Canada on September 10, 1939. The war ended in 1945.

In 1948, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra was established. Other arts followed including Rainbow Stage in the 50s and a new art gallery in the 70s, notes Christopher Dafoe in *Winnipeg: Heart of the Continent*.

Some of the inventions of the decade include a modern colour television system in 1940, the aerosol spray can in 1941, the first electronic digital computer in 1942, Silly Putty and the Slinky in 1943, the microwave oven in 1946, Tupperware in 1947, and Velcro in 1948. The first atomic bomb was detonated in 1945.

## The 1950s: The Move to Trained Staff

The Mother's Association Day Nursery financial statement for 1950 reports that once again its biggest expense was wages. Total expenses were \$7,595.97 and total income was \$7,662.14.

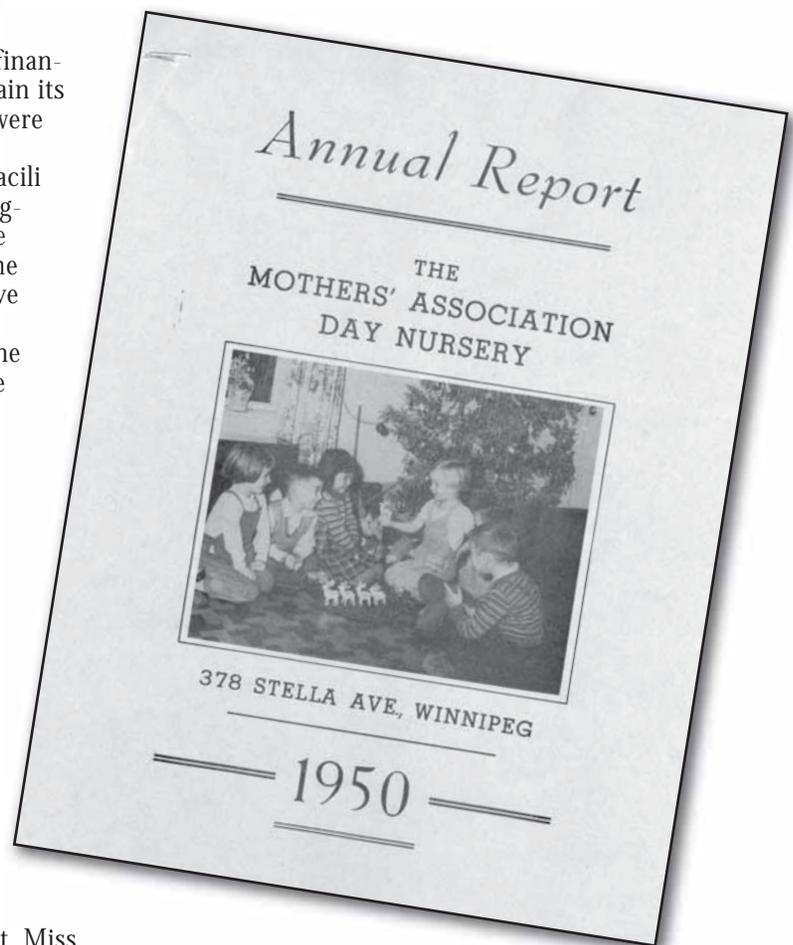
The 1950 Annual Report discusses the facilities. "378 Stella Avenue – an old house, struggling against the ravages of time but still presenting a brave face to the street. It is a home away from home for anywhere up to fifty-five children a day."

Also discussed is the continued use of the nursery facilities by needy women. "A refuge for those whose mothers are forced to seek employment to augment family income, or where illness has temporarily removed the one who usually cares for them. Then, too, some come from homes broken by divorce and separation.

"The children come from all walks of life and who present a cross-section of the melting-pot which is Canada. The nursery is undenominational and international in scope."

The report also gives a glimpse of how the children were cared for. "The Kindergarten staff includes Miss Learned, our matron, who supervises the other children and has charge of the Kindergarten section. The children are trained to care for themselves as far as possible with the matron and her assistant, Miss Julia Rudniski, standing by to lend a hand with outer clothing, rubbers, etc. Here the children learn stories, sing songs, listen to recordings and make all kinds of interesting things."

Operation of the nursery was again still much the same as in the past. It opened at 8:00 a.m., but since some of the mothers had to start work earlier, "it stands ready to receive its daily quota of children



from 7:30 a.m. on. They (the children) are examined in a general way when they arrive just to make sure that there are no incipient cases of measles or other contagious diseases. The children are taught that cleanliness is next to Godliness. They have their own facecloths and towels and are expected to wash their hands and faces before meals. They're given a hot

### *Evolution of the "units"*

*The first Mother's Association of Winnipeg day nursery facility or "unit" was opened on March 12, 1909 at 303 Flora Ave. In 1912, the unit was moved to 378 Stella Ave and remained there for 60 years until it was moved to its current location at 336 Flora (corner of Flora and Robinson) on March*

*22, 1972. In October 1973, the Flora unit was renamed the Gretta H. Brown Unit.*

*The association name was changed to The Mothers Association Day Nursery on April 24, 1951 and then to Day Nursery Centre on November 12, 1954. In January 1956, the second unit was opened at 650 Broadway. In August 1993,*

*the Broadway unit was moved to its current location at the corner of Broadway and Furby. In 1993, it was renamed the Crossways unit.*

*The third unit of the Day Nursery Centre, at 256 Smith Street, opened in September 1970. It was moved to its current location at 355 Kennedy Street in April 1979 and became the Kennedy unit.*

dinner at 11:30 a.m., prepared by Miss Russell, who comes in to help from 8:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. After lunch there is a rest period. Each child has his or her own mattress and Afghan and makes good use of them until 3:00 p.m. During this time, Miss Learned can prepare reports, mend and plan further activities. After 3:00 p.m., the children are served sandwiches and milk. Kindergarten is held in the morning, the afternoon being devoted to play, until the children are called for between the hours of four and six," says the Annual Report.

It also notes that the public health nurse visited the day nursery once a week or more often if required. "Any child that was suspected of needing medical attention was given a card, which admitted the child to the clinic at the Children's Hospital for diagnosis and treatment."

On April 24, 1951 the corporate name of the nursery officially became "The Mother's Association Day Nursery," and on November 12, 1954, the incorporated name became "Day Nursery Centre."

In 1952, admission age was raised to 10 months and then to two years in 1955. In the 50s, children older than six were no longer allowed admission. Children were also now being grouped by ages and group size was reduced. It was another indicator that the

**Some of the first trained staff at the Mother's Association Day Nursery Stella Avenue facility. Seated third from left is Gretta Brown, the first Executive Director circa 1953.**



nursery's social role was changing. It was no longer to be viewed as an employment service to mothers.

In 1953, the trained nursery school consultant Gretta H. Brown (see bio on page 13) was asked to carry out another study of the Mother's Association Day Nursery. Later that year she became its Executive Director.

"The old nurseries dating back to 1909 in Winnipeg provided only custodial care, but the modern nursery is concerned with mental, emotional and social development as well as physical care," notes Brown in a 1958 Winnipeg Free Press article.

The new role required more trained staff to be hired. Women were hired who also had studied child care in colleges or universities.

In addition to trained staff, schedules and timetables were changed identifying specific times for eating, playing, resting, constructive work, stories and music, among other activities.

Brown notes, "It is important that those working with him [the preschool child] have a knowledge of child development and sensitivity to the total needs of the child and family," according to nursery records.

Change is often resisted. The President of the Mother's Association Day Nursery's Board of Directors resigned in late 1953 to protest the decision to hire trained nursery staff. Attendance had dropped to 30 children a day and didn't justify the professional staff, the President felt.

Also noteworthy is that the nursery was now actively involved in self promotion. The May monthly report of 1954 notes that in the first two weeks of June the nursery

would get support from the Community Chest to publicize the nursery. It was decided to hold an open house at the nursery to provide guided tours for women and in the evening, "Groups of men would be invited to see the films of the nursery in action." There was a special evening for the mothers of the children of the nursery and for government ministers in the Stella Avenue district. "As much publicity as possible will be obtained from the papers and the public to instill 'The fact we are not a baby-sitting agency.'" In addition, "We are re-organized according to the highest standards possible," says the May report.



**Gretta Brown visits with the children playing in the yard at the Stella Avenue facility circa 1950s.**

## Gretta Brown

*Gretta H. Brown (nee Gordon) has been described as the “mother of child care in Manitoba,” notes Muriel Smith in an article in the book Extraordinary Ordinary Women.*

*Brown inherited a mission, partly from her illustrious father and social activist mother; to develop and deliver quality child care services for children.*

*Born in Winnipeg in 1903 to Reverend and Mrs. Charles Gordon, Gretta graduated in 1925 from the University of Manitoba with an arts degree. In 1930, she was one of the first to graduate from the Institute of Child Study in Toronto with a diploma in child study followed by an M.A. in Psychology from the University of Toronto.*

*She was the Director of a day nursery in Toronto for seven years. In 1934, Gretta married Arthur Brown and halted her professional career to attend to*

*the needs of her two children.*

*She returned to Winnipeg in 1941 as a volunteer Executive Director for three nursery schools located in local churches. She also served on the Boards of the Children’s Home of Winnipeg and of the Family Bureau. She was asked by the Welfare Planning Council to sit on a committee studying the Mother’s Association Day Nursery and became the Chair. She was a major contributor to the reorganization of the nursery. She was then hired in August 1953 as the Executive Director of the nursery.*

*Gretta modernized the nursery to operate under Canadian nursery-school standards, which were drawn from the Institute of Child Study in Toronto. Under Gretta, the nursery offered an extended nursery school program in a day nursery setting. She insisted on employing a social*

*worker in each of the three Day Nursery Centre facilities. “It was the most influential and progressive child care centre in Western Canada for many years,” say the editors of Early Childhood Care and Education in Canada.*

*Honouring Gretta’s contribution to the success of Day Nursery Centre, one of its three units was named after her. The Gretta Brown Unit in Lord Selkirk Park (corner of Flora and Robinson) is located in the same neighbourhood where the first centre started in 1909.*

*Gretta retired in 1976, but continued to serve the community on the Boards of the United Way and on the Provincial Day Care Liaison Committee. Her life of dedication to children and community service earned her an Honourary Degree from the University of Winnipeg in 1979.*

*Gretta died on March 29, 1987 at the age of 85.*

### 1953 Self Study

The gradual restructuring of child care as a social service began in the 1950s. As no provincial legislation was on the books in Manitoba, in 1953 the Mother's Association Day Nursery Board requested the assistance of the Welfare Council of Greater Winnipeg in a self study. Many members of the Board were not certain that those using the nursery were families

where there was a real social need, and were not convinced that the children were receiving adequate care.

A report prepared by the Welfare Council notes 15 meetings were held over five months and culminated in recommendations that were incorporated in a new program at the Mother's Association Day Nursery that commenced September 1953. The recommendations

called for a reorganization of the nursery and the hiring of additional qualified trained personnel in fields of child development and social work. A nursery based on accepted minimum standards was set up and an integrated program of health, education and casework planned. At this point, the Mother's Association Day Nursery began operating under the City of Winnipeg Welfare Institution By-Law.

In 1955, through the generosity of the Kiwanis Club of Winnipeg, Day Nursery Centre was able to extend its services through the purchase of a building at 650 Broadway. The new unit opened December 1 to give service to children of working mothers in central Winnipeg.

A January 27, 1956 Winnipeg Free Press article notes the Broadway unit was purchased with \$40,000 raised by the Kiwanis Club of Winnipeg through the sale of apples. Brown reported the unit housed 40 children, but a large number of applicants had to be turned away. The rationale at that time to take in a child was whether the child suffered emotional problems, came from a needy family with both parents working or a child from a home where the mother was too ill to care for her children. Children admitted ranged in age from two to five years.

### Children at play, taken from promotional material circa 1954.



“‘Educational play’ takes up much of the time. Weather permitting, there are two outdoor play periods a day. At noon there’s a 10-minute rest before lunch,” says Brown in the article.

In 1955, drawing from Day Nursery Centre’s new standards and policies developed by Brown, the City of Winnipeg Health Committee modified city by-laws to establish standards and regulations for city nurseries.

In January 1956. “The Day Care Financing Committee” was established (under the Community Welfare Planning Council). It was made up of representatives from the three Community Chest nurseries. The purpose was to attempt to secure financial support for nurseries in Winnipeg. A brief was presented to the City Council, and later to the Provincial Government.

### Life and Times

On the world scene, the Korean War erupted in 1950 and would carry through to 1953.

Back in Manitoba, the 1950 flood brought the highest water level on the Red in 89 years. At its maximum, the water covered 1,658 km<sup>2</sup> (640 mi<sup>2</sup>) of valley land on the Canadian side of the border. In Winnipeg, 10,000 homes were flooded with 5,500 having water above the main floor. The Mother's Association Day Nursery received some flood damage.

In Winnipeg, a mode of transportation faded into history. On September 19, 1955, Winnipeg's last streetcar line along Portage Avenue and Main Street was discontinued. Electric trolley buses ran from 1938 until 1970 to be replaced by today's diesel buses, reports the City of Winnipeg's Transit Photo Web page.

Some of the inventions of the decade include the first commercial computer (UNIVAC 1) in 1951, Dr. Jonas Salk's vaccine for poliomyelitis and the first Barbie in 1959.

# The 1960s: The Science of the Child

As the 60s dawned, the Cold War brought the possibility of nuclear annihilation. Young people worried about what they could do to improve relationships between countries and end war. The “boomers” became involved in the political and social climate. Music became a rallying call for the young. Rebelliousness had already become evident in the 50s as some music concerned parents because of its suggestive lyrics and dance moves. Suddenly songs had a message about freedom, justice, love for one another, and as the Vietnam War heated up, against war. The Berlin Wall was erected in 1961 and in October 1962, U.S. President John F. Kennedy took the world to the brink of nuclear war to force Soviet missiles from Cuba. The 60s also gave rise to new ideas about the nature of children and their care. As the women’s movement blossomed, more mothers with preschool children entered the labour force. This put pressure on governments to expand child care services. Child care became a national concern and more provinces set up systems to train teachers. Systems to regulate quality standards were also established.

In 1960, Day Nursery Centre’s two units had 396 families requesting care for their children, according to the centre’s Annual Report. However, due to space limitations, it provided services to about 36% or 143 families. The centre admitted 163 children. Services were provided to 74 sole-support mothers (51% of the total families served). Many of the 74 were separated, divorced, deserted, widowed, unmarried, and mothers whose husbands were imprisoned, says the report. Also noted is that several of the mothers were working so that the husbands could seek higher education. Children were also referred by doctors and psychiatrists due to “emotional disturbances.”

Fees were now on a sliding scale and based on the individual family budget. Fees ranged from 35 cents to \$2.50 daily. Meanwhile, staff wages continued to climb and by 1960 had reached \$40,917 in total.

The Community Chest of Greater Winnipeg contributed over \$40,000 or 75% of the nursery’s budget and

about \$10,500 was generated from user fees.

In 1967, a Lunch and After School Program was launched at the Crescent Fort Rouge United Church and continues today. Care was given to children attending Kindergarten and Grades 1 to 3 at Gladstone School. There were two other similar programs operating in Winnipeg—at Westminster United Church and at Home Street United Church. Day Nursery Centre established the intake for these programs and acted as a consultant.

It was now a widespread belief that child care required a special arrangement of space with learning and teaching aids. The Day Nursery’s April Monthly Report of 1964 notes that educational toys and equipment were being chosen so that a child may develop mentally and socially. “Some of the toys are of an individual nature so that the child may enjoy solitary play if he or she wishes. Others, such as building blocks, trains, dolls, etc. become more fun if a group of children play with them together.”

The 60s also marked a time when the science of child care came into its own. It promised to lead society to a prosperous future. Due in large part to funding and a move toward becoming a primarily teaching facility, the Toronto Institute lost much of its influence over nursery policies and practices. U.S. and other Canadian research centres and training institutions began to have a greater influence on nursery policies and practices.

Day Nursery Centre was still displaying its leadership role in the child care field. Gretta Brown notes in a 1976 paper that Day Nursery Centre acted as a consultant to program directors and was responsible for the intake for five lunch and after school programs initiated between 1965 and 1969. The assistance was discontinued in the early 70s when the programs became independent. She adds that Day Nursery Centre also served on several committees of the Social Planning Council of Winnipeg.

In March 1963, the City of Winnipeg passed the *Social Allowances Act*, providing a subsidy to nurseries for sole support parents living in Winnipeg. Then in December 1964, Day Nursery Centre presented a brief to the City

**Tea party time at the Stella Avenue facility circa 1968.**





of St. James seeking assistance. Counsel approved the request and in March 1965 Day Nursery Centre received financial assistance from the Department of Welfare, City of St. James.

In March 1965, the Day Care Finance Committee sought municipal and provincial financial assistance for day nurseries and in 1968 the nursery received a provincial subsidy under the *Social Assistance Act*. This support continued until January 1976 when Day Nursery Centre was phased in under the Child Day Care Program of Manitoba.

Day Nursery Centre participated on a Study Committee of working mothers and later became a member of the Action Committee set up to carry out the recommendation from the study.

In 1965, Day Nursery Centre approached the Social Planning Council suggesting that a group of community-interested people be gathered together to discuss a Nursery School Teachers Training program at the Manitoba Institute of Technology (now Red River College). The course was introduced and Gretta Brown was on a two-member committee to establish the curriculum. A two-year Child Care Services Diploma was introduced in 1971. It later evolved into the two-year diploma course in Early Childhood Education now offered at many colleges in Manitoba.

In 1965, the Community Chest became the United Way and in November that year Day Nursery Centre continued as one of its 50 agencies.

In 1966, the Canadian Assistance Plan was established to provide services for those in need or likely to become in need. The plan paid 50% of provincial

child care subsidies for low-income families.

In October 1968, Day Nursery Centre became eligible for financial assistance under the Canadian Assistance Plan. Canada and Manitoba provided funding to nurseries under the *Social Allowances Act* through the Special Dependant Care Program. Meanwhile, United Way decreased its funding of day nurseries. United Way funding for Day Nursery Centre dropped from 80% to about 15% of its budget.

### **Life and Times**

The Trans-Canada highway was completed and officially opened in early September 1962.

Then, after much bitter debate, in 1964 the Canadian Parliament approved a new national flag, with a design of a red maple leaf on a white background, bordered by two vertical red panels. The new flag symbolized a growing Canadian nationalism that de-emphasized Canada's ties with Great Britain.

On March 4, 1966 one of the most severe winter blizzards hit Manitoba, lasting 20 hours with a snowfall in Winnipeg of 35.6 cm (14") and wind speeds of 80 km/hr (50 mph). Winnipeg was shut down. Stories abounded of people who didn't make it home from work and spent the night in their offices.

After the disastrous 1950 flood, plans were laid to build a diversion around Winnipeg. Completed in 1968, the floodway or "Duff's Ditch" cost \$63 M.

Some of the inventions of the decade include the pacemaker in 1960, the handheld calculator in 1967 and the Breathalyzer in 1967. The first man walked on the moon in 1969.

## The 1970s: More Expansion Plans

The changing emphasis from the 60s onward related to child intellectual development brought new ways of describing and thinking about the care of children. Therefore, by about the 70s, what had been called “day nursery care” had now become “early childhood education.” Nurseries developed curriculums and the model that was adopted is essentially the one in place today across Canada. The care of infants and school-age children became part of a framework of supporting the development of the child.

Meanwhile, growing demand for child care services led to another expansion phase at Day Nursery Centre. In September 1970, the third unit of Day Nursery Centre opened in Trinity Parish Hall, 256 Smith Street. This was made possible through the generosity of the



### *Day Nursery Centre Logo*

*The current Day Nursery Centre stylized logo of a child and teddy bear was adopted in early 1971. It first appeared on the Annual Meeting report for 1970, presented April 20, 1971 at the Trinity Parish Hall, the Annual Report notes.*

*“The logo on the cover was designed by one of our nursery mothers whose little 2½-year-old boy attends the Broadway unit.”*

members of the Holy Trinity Anglican Church, who provided the use of the downstairs facilities, consisting of two large playrooms, bathrooms and kitchen. Financial assistance was also given by the Zonta Club of Winnipeg and by the International Order of the Daughters of the Empire. The playground was equipped with a, “...climbing arrangement made of hydro poles of varying heights, swings, sandbox and an existing playhouse splashed with a multitude of colours...” notes a Day Nursery Centre Annual Report.

The expenses of the nursery by 1970 had reached nearly \$106,000 (for two units for six months and one for four months) with revenues of just over \$114,000. And of its revenue, only a little more than \$19,000 came from parent fees. The Manitoba Department of Health and Social Development kicked in over \$83,000, United Way \$7,500 and the City of Winnipeg Public Welfare Department about \$2,000.

Day Nursery Centre’s 1970 Annual Report describes the nursery as offering, “...pre-schoolers a unique opportunity to spend a large part of the day with other children their own age. Trained nursery school teachers with understanding and warmth, using educational toys and materials, provide children with an atmosphere where creative abilities and social learning can develop and grow. In the well-equipped outdoor playground, children can play all year round more actively and develop their muscles. The routine periods of eating, sleeping and washroom teach self-reliance and independence.

“Social workers and public health nurses are the other members of the professional team, which makes an inter-disciplinary approach possible,” says the Annual Report.

During 1970, 199 children from 182 homes were enrolled for child care in Day Nursery Centre’s three units. The 199 children included 122 from homes of separated parents, 36 were admitted because the families had financial problems, 13 came from “disturbed homes,” and 19 from homes where one or more parents were students. Six children were admitted on a treatment basis.

The Annual Report reprinted a quote given to the press by one of the mothers using the nursery:

“The fact that Susie was somewhere safe and being cared for by trained people, took the strain of worry off me. Her care at the nursery has been tremendous.

“My only regret is that there are hundreds of mothers in dire need who would go out and make a new life for themselves if they could be sure their children were being cared for as well.”

Another fitting tribute to Day Nursery Centre was



this poem written by one of the nursery mothers and published in the 1970 Annual Report:

“Through rain and snow, hail and sleet,  
 And even through the summer’s heat,  
 The teachers faithfully arrive  
 To tend their group of thirty-five.  
 Now the busy day does start –  
 Greet the children as mothers depart,  
 Help children to hang up their clothes,  
 Tie a shoelace and blow a nose.  
 Sing a song and read some prose,  
 Paint a scene – so the morning goes,  
 Serve tasty lunches and hot meals,  
 Treats to the tune of gleeful squeals.  
 Cuddle at nap time, mark the charts  
 Listen to dreams in dear little hearts.  
 How does a mother give the thanks you are due?  
 She prays each night for strength and  
 patience for you.  
 I.H.”

Between April 1970 and December 1971, Day Nursery Centre ran a new building campaign to replace the aging Stella Avenue unit. Plans were laid out for a new, modern facility at 336 Flora Avenue. Funding was obtained from the province (\$40,000), the Winnipeg Foundation (\$12,650), past and current Board members and a host of organizations and businesses. Total cost was \$129,202. One of the features of the new facility was Day Nursery Centre’s first Kindergarten lunch and after-school care program. Initial capacity was for 65 children, 40 in full

#### **Children at play at the Smith Street unit circa 1970.**

child care and 25 in a lunch and after-school program for children attending David Livingston School, and who live in the Lord Selkirk Park urban renewal area, according to a March 21, 1971 Winnipeg Free Press article.

By 1971, staff wages were now \$124,000 with food at \$6,000 as the next biggest expense. The major income sources included: over \$22,000 from nursery fees; just over \$109,000 from the Province of Manitoba, Department of Health and Social Services; and \$10,000 from the United Way of Greater Winnipeg.

During the summer of 1971, strikes and two fires delayed completion of the new unit. The official opening was held on March 22, 1972. The Lieutenant-Governor John McKeag and his wife attended, and greetings were extended from the Province of Manitoba by Premier Ed Schreyer and from The Winnipeg Foundation by Mr. Hugh A. Benham.

By 1974, Day Nursery Centre’s three units provided care and education for 259 children with 82% from sole support parents where there was just one income. Roughly 20% of the child care was provided to children with special needs who were referred from the Child Development Clinic, Children’s Aid Society, Society for Crippled Children and Adults, Jewish Child and Family Service, private doctors and other agencies. Day Nursery Centre was a pioneer of this service with many nurseries now accepting special needs children.

The staff and Board of Day Nursery Centre held a reception on October 15, 1973 for Gretta Brown in hon-

our of her 20 years of service as Executive Director. The Flora Avenue unit was officially named the “GRETTA H. BROWN UNIT.”

Day Nursery Centre was not afraid to speak its mind about the state of child care and lack of regulations and funding. Day Nursery Centre’s President notes in the March 12, 1973 Annual Report that the nursery was actively involved in lobbying government to offer its services to assist in drafting regulations and standards for nurseries. In briefs and presentations to government, the Board had indicated, “We believe that all child caring services should be regulated by the Province so that a basic, uniform standard can be established to ensure that good care is available for all children.” The report went on to criticize the lack of consideration by the federal government for the recommendations on child care produced by the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. “I submit that governments are shirking their responsibilities by not acting upon the recommendations submitted to them,” says the nursery’s President in the Annual Report.

The Royal Commission’s recommendations recognized child care as a necessity in order for women to utilize their right to work. It was one of the driving forces that brought political pressure to bear on all levels of government to provide legislation and funding for more day nursery spaces so that all mothers could have access to child care services.

An article in the March 21, 1971 Winnipeg Free Press notes the government wasn’t convinced there was a need for child care centres. Lionel Orlikow, then Human Development Advisor to the planning secretariat of the Manitoba government, said in an address to the Annual Meeting of Day Nursery Centre that his committee’s analysis of the child care situation produced “mixed evidence.” He added that subsidized day nurseries, nurseries of other types and a number of pre-school programs had either not been operated at capacity or had “died” last year.

“Perhaps child care hasn’t matured to the point where it’s regarded as a necessary service—we found a difference between need and demand,” he said.

In 1974, a Provincial Child Day Care Program was established by the Department of Health and Social Development. It provided start-up and operating grants to non-profit centres and family child care homes, as well as subsidies for eligible low-income parents.

The Manitoba Child Care Association was established on May 11, 1974 at a meeting of day care parents, staff, and interested people who were concerned with the effects of the Federal/Provincial day care subsidy program on the quality of child care in Manitoba, according to the Manitoba Child Care Association Newsletter, August 21, 1974.

Recognizing the professional stature of Day Nursery Centre, in 1973 the nursery began accepting training placements from various University of Manitoba faculties, and Red River and

Confederation College (in Ft. William, Ontario).

In a paper prepared by Gretta Brown in August 1976, just before her retirement, she listed comments made by the Co-ordinator for Child Care Services at Red River Community College. “We attempt to expose our students to as many programs as possible, and I feel it is important that they see, as they can at day nurseries, that child care does not begin when the child arrives at the centre and end when he or she leaves, but is rather a commitment, which extends through the child to the community. We appreciate the efforts you have made to emphasize this to our students.”

In April 1979, the Smith Street Unit moved into 355 Kennedy Street, a Manitoba Housing Authority complex.

### Life and Times

In 1970, Manitoba celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. On October 6 the next year, Winnipeggers elected its first council of the new unified City of Winnipeg and Royal assent was given to Bill 36, *The City of Winnipeg Act*, creating Unicity, reports the City of Winnipeg’s Website.

Winnipeg’s population by 1974 was nearly 600,000 strong, double that of 1956.

On January 14, 1975 the new Convention Centre opened and a year later on April 30 the new Royal Canadian Mint opened its doors.

Some of the inventions of the decade include the VCR and LCD watches in 1971, gene splicing in 1973, the Post-it Note in 1974, and cellular phones and the Walkman in 1979.

### Child intellectual development became a fundamental part of early childhood education circa 1970s.



# The 1980s: Renovations & Expansion Once Again

The 74<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Day Nursery Centre was held April 5, 1982 in Eaton's Assembly Hall. The Board President welcomed the guests, who included: Mrs. Myrna Phillips, MLA for Wolesley and Legislative Assistant to the Honourable Len Evans; Gerrie Hammond, MLA for Kirkfield Park; Charlotte Oleson, MLA for Gladstone and Alice Balsillie, City of Winnipeg Councillor.

The Board President noted the goals and purposes of the centre were to:

1. *promote the individual development of each child;*
2. *encourage socialization;*
3. *provide group experiences in an environment structured for young people; and*
4. *supplement and support family life.*

The nursery was running a surplus of over \$22,000 in 1981 compared to nearly \$3,000 the previous year. The nursery's funding from the provincial government, in the form of a maintenance grant, was \$650 per child, up from \$500 the previous year. The province also paid a per diem of \$8.50 per child. The United Way funding of \$33,000 was the last to be received by the nursery. Funding ceased on January 1, 1982. The reason given by the United Way, in part, was:

"The United Way Funding Policy with respect to child day care services will be to consider requests for the funding of demonstration projects or special projects which are not provided for in government support programs.

"The United Way will not fund the provision of minimum standard child care services (as per the standard recommended by the Community Day Care Study Commission) since this is seen as a responsibility of the provincial government, parents and other funders."

To compensate, the immediate action taken by Day Nursery Centre was to reduce the social worker staff from two to one person and the remaining social worker's hours reduced by one fifth; cooks were asked to work a four-day week and the nutritional program reduced to four days a week from Monday to Thursday with a sandwich on Friday; and the fee structure for all parents was increased by 50 cents a day. All parents were asked to contribute an extra \$10 every four weeks. Maintenance costs were also slashed. For long-term stability, on April 1, 1982, the province upped the per diem rate from \$8.50 to \$9.50 and its maintenance grant from \$650 to \$800 per child, and the income eligibility for subsidy was raised by 12%.

Day Nursery Centre's President also expressed a continuing and increasing concern about, "The generally low level of salaries which are paid to workers in the field of child care. If it wasn't for their love of children and the satisfaction of their work, they would have abandoned

their career long ago." He also voiced another concern that had been growing in recent years, "...the lack of graduates in child care training who are available from the Community College."

He went on to say the Board was encouraged to hear that the province would pass a *Child Day Care Act*, which would enforce standards for child care and make child care centres more accountable for the public funds they were receiving. He also clearly expressed that the nursery was no longer operating on its founding objective of 75 years earlier—an employment service for mothers. "The Board believes that child care is the right of every child and should not be seen as a service to parents."

The acting Executive Director added that, "Child care can no longer be regarded as a charity for the poor, or a frill for the rich, but a right for all children who need it. And as... statistics show, many children need it."

The acting Executive Director also expressed a concern that has dogged the child care industry. "The lack of quality child care... has never been more critical than now. The fact that two-income couples, as well as sole-support parents, have become the norm is compounded by the fact that the fastest growing group of working women are mothers with children under three years of age."

In the summer of 1984, a federally funded Core Area Initiative Program facilitated renovations to all three centres:

- 650 Broadway received extensive renovations costing \$62,000, which greatly improved the efficiency of the existing space. Day Nursery Centre funds added the final touches to the renovations by re-finishing the front of the building.
- 355 Kennedy Street saw some improvements in the furnishings, however, no structural changes took place as the property belonged to the Winnipeg Regional Housing Authority.
- Gretta Brown Unit was also renovated extensively at a cost of \$42,000.

In 1987, two rooms were added to the Kennedy unit—a staff room and a quiet room—to better suit the needs of the staff and children. The addition was made possible through a Manitoba Community Places grant of \$12,000, a Provincial Upgrading Grant of \$3,000 and a \$9,000 grant from The Winnipeg Foundation.

In 1988, a consultative study regarding the administrative management of Day Nursery Centre was authorized by the Board and implemented by Price Waterhouse. The study suggested a more professional format for billing parents, which would be centrally controlled through the office. It also suggested a more supervisory role for the nursery's Directors. Both of these suggestions were implemented. The study also recommended more admin-



istrative training for Day Nursery Centre Directors.

To help alleviate the shortage of child care staff and to provide an educational environment for people interested in child care studies, Day Nursery Centre spearheaded the development of a program to place volunteers in its facilities. Other nurseries in the core-area soon joined the program. The Day Care Volunteer Program was launched in the 80s. In 1986, the program provided 185 volunteers to seven day cares for a total of 10,000 hours of child care services, reports a March 16, 1987 Winnipeg Free Press story. It was funded by the Core Area Initiative, the Kiwanis Club of Manitoba and the Community Services Council.

The *Community Child Day Care Standards Act* passed in 1982. Under the new legislation, child care fees were provincially established. A Competence Based Training and Assessment Program was implemented. It also included more stringent educational requirements for trained staff.

In 1983, United Way funding ended and the social worker position was terminated.

In 1985, the *Community Child Day Care Standards Act* and Regulations were amended.

In 1988, the *Canada Child Care Act* was proposed by the federal government. If implemented it would have expanded the number of licensed day nursery spaces to 200,000. The bill failed to pass due to an election.

On October 17, 1989, Day Nursery Centre employees, Board members and parents joined child care workers

#### **Volunteers and children at the Broadway Street unit circa 1980s.**

across Manitoba in a day of demonstration at the legislature to protest low wages.

In the late 80s, the Provincial Government department under whose authority the child care centres functioned, became known as "Day Care, Youth and Economic Support."

#### **Life and Times**

One of the lasting and endearing memories of the 80s is the image of Terry Fox and his Marathon of Hope to raise money for cancer research.

On August 27, 1980, Southam Newspapers closed the Winnipeg Tribune after 94 years in publication. In response to demand for a new newspaper voice in the city, the Winnipeg Sun was first published on November 5, 1980. It was initially published Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The paper began publishing Sunday to Friday in 1982 and became a seven-day publication in 1992.

On July 28, 1988, the sod was turned marking the beginning of The Forks Development and on October 4 the following year The Forks Market opened for business.

Some of the inventions of the decade include the first IBM-PC in 1981, the Apple Macintosh in 1984, Windows Operating System in 1985 and the disposable camera in 1986.

# The 90s: Evolution of the Family

Canadian families looked very different by the 90s than those of 20 or 30 years earlier. The traditional family with a male breadwinner and a female homemaker had by now been replaced by the dual-earner family with both spouses working outside the home.

According to the Vanier Institute, a national charitable organization dedicated to promoting the well being of Canadian families, 45% of workers in 1995 were parents with children under age 18. In 1994, both spouses worked in seven out of 10 married or common-law couples (under age 65), up significantly from about one-third of couples 30 years earlier. Only one in five couples relied on a single male earner in 1994. Even among couples with children under age seven, 70% were dual earners. In almost half of dual-earner families, both partners worked full-time for the full year in 1996, marking a steady increase over previous decades. Meanwhile, average family size was shrinking.

In the later 80s, the province had established three classification levels for Child Care Workers with the highest level being CCW III. As of August 1990, Day Nursery Centre staff were classified CCW III (13) CCW II (8) and CCW I (2). In 1998, Child Care Worker titles were changed again by the province to Early Childhood Educator (ECE) with ECE III being the highest classification, and Child Care Assistant (CCA) replacing the Child Care Worker I classification.

Day Nursery Centre's long history gave it the ability to examine its growth. One of the outcomes of this type of analysis was a call to establish a Heritage Expansion Fund in 1994. The fund was created to provide a source of capital when expansion was required.

The 90s marked another major expansion period for Day Nursery Centre. The *Child Day Care Act* (1982) with its attendant spatial requirements, made nursery staff and Board aware that the Broadway unit needed more space. Lofts were added in each playroom to increase square footage. However, the nursery still felt overcrowded and lacked storage.

As a result, in March 1990, the Board initiated a feasibility study which determined the best approach was to be a part of the new community service building, one-half block west at the corner of Broadway and Furby, the former location of the Young United Church, which was destroyed by fire in December 1987. The new building was named "Crossways In Common" because it involved six partners—West Broadway Community Services, West Broadway Youth Outreach, Artemis Housing Co-operative, Hope Mennonite Church, Young United Church, and Day Nursery Centre.

The feasibility study also showed that Day Nursery Centre should re-build the Broadway unit to serve 50 children rather than the 35 it was licensed to handle. In

addition to the Heritage Fund, the Executive Director sought funding from the local community to cover the construction costs. Total construction cost of the new Broadway unit was budgeted at \$606,850. Construction began in June 1992 and was completed the following year. In August 1993, the Broadway unit relocated to the Crossways In Common complex and at that time the Broadway unit was renamed "Crossways."

The Executive Director retired in 1993 and due to financial constraints the Executive Director and Book-keeper positions were restructured. The Crossways Centre Executive Director took on the role of Executive Director and Director of that unit. An infant program was opened on August 2, 1994 at the Crossways unit to care for eight children, ages 12 weeks to two years of age.

The Unemployment Insurance Commission granted Day Nursery Centre one-year funding (1995-1996) to hire a Fund Development Officer to investigate ways to raise revenue. One of the outcomes of that work was the development of the nursery's first mission statement.

In 1997, Day Nursery Centre received a \$5,000 grant from the Kiwanis Club of Winnipeg to purchase much-needed toys. A Spring Concert featuring Jake Chenier was held and the funds raised were used to purchase new equipment for the Gretta Brown Unit playground.

Manitoba Child and Youth Secretariat approached Day Nursery Centre to use the Gretta Brown Unit as a research site for the new "Early Start Project." Health Canada's Community Action Planning Committee funded the program, which provided families with opportunities to access home visitors. The home visitors worked with families to assess their needs and support level. The program included a toy and book lending library and parenting programs. The home visitors supported families in much the same way as social workers did in the past.

Early Start funding from Health Canada ended March 31, 2001, however, Healthy Child Manitoba contracted with Day Nursery Centre to continue funding this program. Early Start expanded to provide services to families in the Kennedy and Crossways units, as well as Gretta Brown.

One of the goals of Early Start was to work with families using a strength-based approach. This method not only helped Day Nursery Centre work with families involved in Early Start, but with all families in the three units.

The Early Start program merged with Babies First programs, which ran throughout the province. The resulting new program "Families First" was funded by Healthy Child Manitoba and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority and was no longer housed in child care facilities as of April 2005.

A perennial problem for public child care, the rela-



**Children at play at the Broadway unit circa 1990s.**

tively low staff wages compared to other industries, was brought home once again in 1998 with the study, "You Bet I Care! A Canada-Wide Study on Wages, Working Conditions and Practices in Child Care Centres" published by the Centre for Families, Work and Well-Being, University of Guelph, Ontario. It found real wages for Early Childhood Educators in Manitoba fell by up to 12% between 1991 and 1998.

### **Life and Times**

On October 19, 1990 the Kildonan Bridge over the Red River opened for traffic in Winnipeg.

On the afternoon of May 6, 1995, the Winnipeg Jets held a farewell at the Winnipeg Arena, commonly referred to as "the funeral."

On November 17, 1996 Winnipeg recorded its heaviest snowfall in a single day in 30 years. As if not enough, on April 5 and 6, the following year Winnipeg recorded the worst blizzard in a century. Over a 24-hour period, Mother Nature dumped 48 cm (19") of

snow with wind gusts of up to 85 km/hr (53 mph).

When the snow melted, it produced the, "Flood of the Century." The City of Grand Forks, North Dakota was devastated and many rural communities sustained severe damage, but the Red River Floodway protected the City of Winnipeg. At the flood crest, the flow in the Red River approaching Winnipeg was 3,908 m<sup>3</sup> (138,010 ft<sup>3</sup>) per second, enough water to fill Winnipeg's Pan Am Olympic Pool once every second. The Red River crested at 7.5 metres (24.5'), which was higher than the 1950 flood.

In June 1999, the CanWest Global Baseball Park opened and from July 24 to August 8 Winnipeg hosted the 13<sup>th</sup> Pan American Games.

Some of the inventions of the decade include the World Wide Web in 1990 and the DVD in 1995.

## New Millennium: New Changes

According to the Vanier's Institute Website, for the 15% of all Canadian households that used child care centres in 2004, the average expenditure for child care was over \$2,900. The average cost ranged from a low of \$1,600 in Quebec to a high of \$3,600 in Ontario.

The need for child care services was increasing and has continued to increase since these figures were tabulated. Demand for Day Nursery Centre's services has reflected this trend. Today Day Nursery Centre provides Early Childhood Care and Education for 128 children on a daily basis at its three units (Crossways, Gretta Brown and Kennedy).

Day Nursery Centre's staff and Board held their first strategic planning session in early 2000 and generated a short- and long-term plan for the organization. That

year also saw considerable planning and fundraising for an addition and renovations to the Gretta Brown Unit. The addition and renovations were completed in June 2001. They included an 74.3 m<sup>2</sup> (800 ft<sup>2</sup>) multi-purpose addition on the second level, a staff room and an outdoor storage area on the lower level, and an overall renovation of the exterior of the building. Funders for this project were the Winnipeg Development Agreement, The Winnipeg Foundation, Manitoba Community Places, Neighbourhoods Alive and the Kiwanis Club of Winnipeg.

Late in 2000 and early 2001, a consultant from "Teachable Moments" conducted an organizational review of Day Nursery Centre. The review led to the revising of the Early Childhood Educators, Child Care Assistants and Management Team Job descriptions. One of the



## ***Vision Statement***

*Day Nursery Centre strives to be recognized as a leader and advocate in the Early Childhood Care and Education profession by:*

- *Integrating the newest research in programming approaches that best suit the development of each child and his/her family.*
- *Promoting current Professional Development and the Health, Safety and Wellness practices of its employees.*

first steps was to split the present “Executive Director/Crossways Centre Director” position as of June 1, 2001. New positions were created including an Early Childhood Inclusion Specialist and a Children’s Service Manager (later to be known as the Coordinator of Children’s Programs). In addition to the core skills expected of an Early Childhood Educator, the Inclusion Specialist coordinates provision and development services and programming for the children with special needs at Day Nursery Centre.

As part of promoting professionalism and assisting staff, Day Nursery Centre also implemented and budgeted a 24-hour/year professional development policy.

In 2002, the Coordinator of Children’s Programs position was created under a three-year pilot project with funding from the Winnipeg Foundation. The Coordinator was responsible for the development, implementation and evaluation of children’s programs operated by Day Nursery Centre, as well as providing support and mentoring for staff in “developmentally appropriate programming,” and inclusion and evaluations of the three units. The Coordinator assisted staff in changing from theme-based programming to a new curriculum called Emergent Curriculum, which focuses on child centered and directed programming. It also allows staff and children to be more creative and have more control over what they learn, which in turn increases motivation and retention. At the end of 2004, funding for the Coordinator position ended, although the impact of this position on Day Nursery Centre lives on.

The first staff/Board retreat was held in Gimli on April 7 and 8, 2001. All agreed it was a valuable opportunity for team building and a learning experience. The retreat has run bi-annually since.

Keeping up with the times, in 2002 Day Nursery Centre launched a Website: [www.daynurserycentre.ca](http://www.daynurserycentre.ca). It provides information on programming and contact information, as well as a history page.

Meanwhile, the Manitoba government asked for public feedback on the Child Day Care Regulatory Review Committee’s report, “A Vision for Child Care and Development in Manitoba.” Over 24,000 Manitobans responded, with most expressing support for the concept of an

affordable, accessible, high-quality, universal child care system. As a result, in 2002 the Manitoba government created a Five-Year Plan for Child Care, with the intent to support and expand Manitoba’s child care system. The Manitoba government promised to continue to work with the federal government to improve the child care system. The plan had three major elements over a five-year period—maintaining and improving quality, improving accessibility and improving affordability.

In June 2002, Day Nursery Centre temporarily discontinued its hot lunch program due to lack of funds. It reached out to the community with a fund raising campaign “Young Hearts Eat Smart.” And the community responded. A few of the community partners and funders included Edward Carrier Salon, The Winnipeg Foundation, Carpathia Credit Union, Manitoba Nutrition Council and Mazon Canada. By October, the program was up and running once again. Although funding for the program struggles at times, the staff and Board fully believe the program is very important for children and work hard to make it happen each year.

For several years, Day Nursery Centre faced high staff absenteeism, high workplace and personal injuries and illnesses, as well as climbing Workers Compensation Board (WCB) rates. Day Nursery Centre applied to the WCB Community Initiatives and Research Program for \$10,000 to investigate and implement workplace health and safety procedures for child care employees. The pilot project (“Day Nursery Centre’s Workplace Health, Safety and Wellness” program) was implemented in 2002.

As a progressive move forward, a new vision statement was created in 2004.

In 2005, a new Federal Government child care proposal, the National Early Learning and Child Care program, was introduced and Manitoba was the first province to sign the bi-lateral agreement. However in March 2006, the newly elected government cancelled the agreement. The child care community and advocates expressed their deep concern about the loss of the funding and commitments made by the previous government.

Also in 2005, Day Nursery Centre, wanting to reflect its commitment to provide meaningful inclusion for all

## ***Inclusion Statement***

*“All Children are entitled to full participation and support to meet their individual needs. At Day Nursery Centre, we believe that all children have the right to be valued, accepted and included. We embrace inclusion and celebrate the diversity in our community such as culture, language, religion, socio-economic status and ability. Being an inclusive centre in which all children and families are welcome offers countless learning opportunities and benefits for everyone.”*

Day Nursery Centre set out to develop a workplace that would be a great place to be for staff and families. Along with assistance from Manitoba Workers' Compensation Board Community Initiative and Research Program, MFL Occupational Health Centre and a dedicated group of staff and volunteers, the "Day Nursery Centre Workplace Health, Safety and Wellness Project" was created.

This video compiles the success of this 2 phased pilot project into a tool that can be used to facilitate action in other organizations, in particular in the Early Childhood Education field, which is looking to decrease the incidents of staff injuries and absenteeism while improving spotting safety hazards on the job.

Day Nursery Centre discovered that developing a Healthy Workplace not only benefits the centre and the personal wellness of the staff, but creates a healthy and stable environment for the families we serve.

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WORKPLACE HEALTH SAFETY AND WELLNESS

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a guide to  
W O R K P L A C E  
H E A L T H  
S A F E T Y  
A N D  
W E L L N E S S

children, approved a new Inclusion Statement.

In March 2006, Day Nursery Centre's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee first met to prepare for its 100<sup>th</sup> AGM in 2008 and 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary year in 2009.

Also in 2006, the Manitoba Child Care program implemented a requirement that all Child Care Assistants (CCAs) employed by a centre for more than a year must complete a 40-hour Early Childhood Education course through a Manitoba college. Rising to the occasion, Day Nursery Centre CCAs successfully completed the course.

The WCB had approved a grant in late 2005 for a second phase to Day Nursery Centre's Health, Safety and Wellness Program. Building on the successful activities and findings of its first project, the new funding allowed Day Nursery Centre to investigate and share its findings with others in the Early Childhood Care and Education field. A third project followed in 2006. A 15-minute DVD was produced summarizing Day Nursery Centre's findings from its previous two projects. The DVD became a training tool for child care staff and a means to stimulate other centres to create their own workplace health, safety and wellness program. "A Guide to Workplace Health, Safety and Wellness" premiered at Day Nursery Centre's Annual General Meeting held at the Ellice Street Café and Theatre on June 23, 2006.

As part of the project's objectives, Day Nursery Centre provided the video to community educational institutions and libraries as a resource for those in the Early Childhood Care and Education field. Day Nursery Centre also worked with the Manitoba Child Care Program in 2007 to distribute the video to all child care facilities in

Manitoba. Day Nursery Centre continues to receive inquiries from child care facilities on how they can implement a culture of health, safety and wellness in their centres. Day Nursery Centre has distributed the video to other programs in Canada and the U.S.

Day Nursery Centre's 2006 Annual Report listed expenses at over \$1.2 million. Wages represented roughly 83% of the cost to operate the three centres. By 2007, expenses and revenues were over \$1.3 million.

In April 2007, the provincial government announced an overall 2% increase to unit funding. It also announced a 13% adjustment to subsidy levels so that low- and middle-income families would be eligible for subsidy. A 40-cent reduction to the \$2.40 non-subsidized daily fee for subsidized families was also implemented.

As of September 2007, there were 27,060 licensed child care spaces in the province.

### Life and Times

In the fall of 2003, the Provencher twin bridges were completed along with the pedestrian walkway named "Esplanade Riel." The dramatic cable-stayed pedestrian bridge became Winnipeg's newest landmark.

In the fall of 2004, the MTS Centre opened, replacing the Eaton's Building, on Portage Avenue. In the spring of 2006, the former home of the Winnipeg Jets, the Winnipeg Arena, was demolished.

One of the popular inventions of this decade is the iPod, introduced by Apple Inc. in 2001.

# Ready for the Future

Day Nursery Centre now operates three inner city child care units (Gretta Brown, Crossways and Kennedy) with 37 staff including Early Childhood Educators, Child Care Assistants and administrative support.

“Our child care programs are concerned with providing the children with quality care and appropriate experiences, so that each child may grow to his or her full potential as an individual. Our goal for children at Day Nursery Centre is to make all children feel good about themselves and secure in their growing awareness of the larger world. We want children to become mentally healthy, physically able, truly creative and socially sensitive. Each of our programs provides: a caring, nurturing environment; developmentally appropriate activities; a wholesome lunch and snack program; integration of children with special needs; and a monthly newsletter,” says Day Nursery Centre’s Executive Director.

It’s interesting to note, Day Nursery Centre’s hours of operation have not changed much in 100 years. The three units are open Monday to Friday with hours ranging from 7:15 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

As an indicator of the evolution of Day Nursery Centre, here’s a list of its current objectives:

- promote each child’s self esteem;
- provide a warm, caring, nurturing, inclusive, anti-biased environment for every child and his/her family;
- promote the individual development of each child;
- encourage the socialization of every child;
- provide developmentally appropriate group experiences in a child-centered environment; and
- enrich and support family life.

Child care is now a fact of life for many Canadian families, but for most of the past century it’s been the

subject of debate. Many considered turn-of-the-century day nurseries little more than custodial care, while politicians of the 1950s blamed juvenile delinquency on child care. More recently the debate has swirled around the merits of universal child care versus traditional parenting.

Although the organization and operation of the Mother’s Association of Winnipeg Day Nursery has undergone a tremendous transformation, the original goals of those early pioneers remain. The care and education of children and the support of their parents has become a part of accepted child care practice.

One hundred years have come and gone and Day Nursery Centre is now the oldest continuous child care facility west of the Great Lakes, it remains a people-helping agency with a staff and Board that strives to provide a balance between supporting families and the community, and providing high-quality Early Childhood Care and Education for children today and for generations to come.

“Quality child care is a commitment, which extends through the child to the community.”

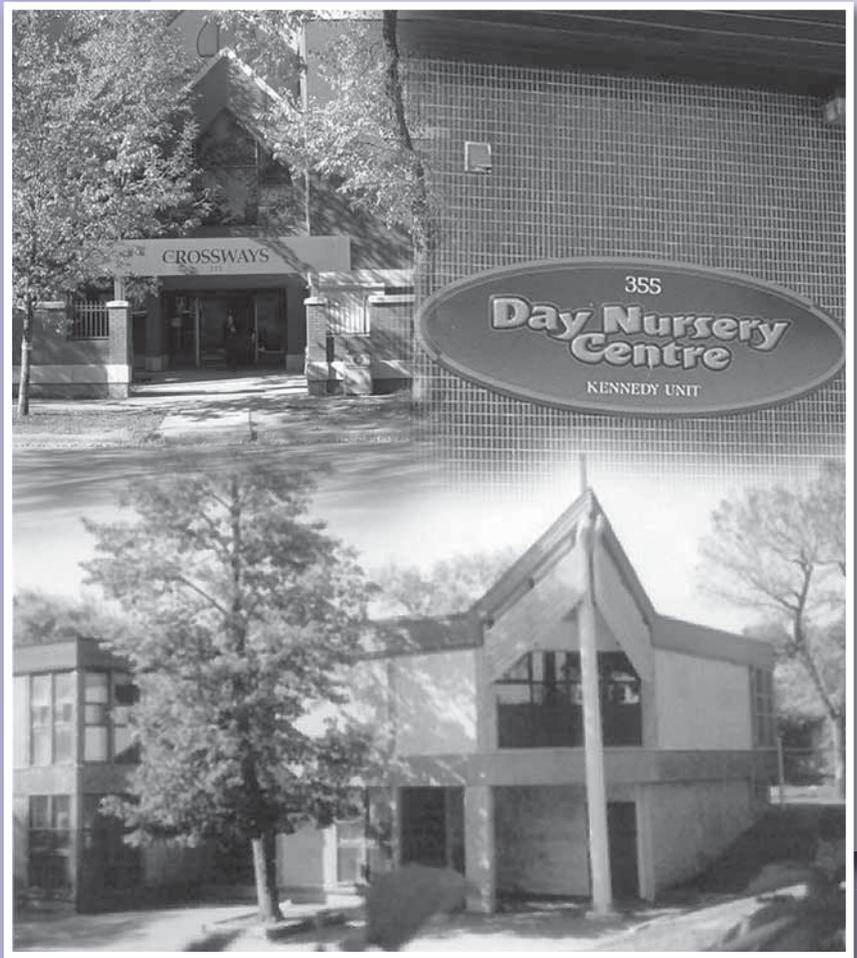
*It is with a profound sense of pride as we cast our eyes over the past 100 years and realize how so many people have worked so hard to produce a wonderful legacy. As we close this short history, we are steadfast in our belief that we have enriched the lives of an untold number of families. This is the undeniable reward for all those who work in child care. It has given us meaning and purpose and the desire to enter the next 100 years of support and service with much anticipation.*

**Day Nursery Centre continues to be an essential service for today’s families.**



## *Mission Statement*

*Day Nursery Centre is a child care facility which emphasizes individual growth for all children by promoting a safe, healthy, and caring, learning environment through its dedication to the family and community.*



## *Our Thanks*

This small history of Day Nursery Centre was made possible by the support of various organizations and people who gave funding and their time. It is with utmost sincerity and gratitude that we thank:

Manitoba Heritage Grants Program for funding support.

Donna Varga for the use of considerable references from her book, *Constructing the Child: A History of Canadian Day Care*.

The Winnipeg Foundation for funding support and for use of images from their archives (pages 1, 16, 23 and 27).

Publisher James Lorimer and Company Limited for the image on page 3 from *Winnipeg an Illustrated History* by Alan Artibise, copyright 1977.

The Manitoba Archives for images on pages 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14, 15 and 19.

Board member Charlotte Robbins and Executive Director Fernanda Hodgson for compiling information for the book.

Phil Tousignant of Avenue 4 Print for assistance in printing.

Collective Spark Communications for design of the book.

**Dave Wilkins for researching and writing this history.**